

**MY PERSPECTIVE AS A CARBON COUNTY COMMISSIONER ON
SANPETE COUNTY'S PROPOSED GOOSEBERRY NARROWS RESERVOIR PROJECT**

prepared by
William D. Krompel
July 2008

In February 2008 during the legislative session, Sanpete officials and their consultants lobbied the Utah House and Senate to vote in favor of Resolutions supporting the Gooseberry Narrows Reservoir Project. A letter of support for the project was also sought from Governor Huntsman. The sought after Resolutions and letter could then be used to demonstrate Utah State government's approval and support for the Gooseberry Narrows project in Washington D.C.

One of Sanpete's arguments given to the legislature was "they only wanted to store the water that is spilling over the spillway at Scofield every year that is of no use to either Carbon or Emery Counties."

Fortunately, Governor Huntsman, to his credit and sense of fairness, wanted to hear Carbon County's perspective on this critical issue – not just Sanpete's. To accomplish this, the Governor assigned his rural affairs advisor, Gayle McKeachnie to handle this matter.

Since this issue is enormously important to all of us, I wanted to share with you three attached documents I provided to Mr. McKeachnie in a meeting I had with him on this issue.

Attachment 1 on your e-mail is the history of 63 years of water data at Scofield Reservoir from 1945 to 2007. Historically, Scofield Reservoir only spilled 33% of the time or 21 years in the last 63. As a matter of fact, during one of Carbon County's drought years on June 19, 1991, Scofield Reservoir's maximum active storage was only 3,000 acre feet out of a maximum active storage of 65,800 – or less than 5% capacity. This amount of water represents only 10% of what Carbon water users actually use if available with their valid water rights – 30,000 acre feet per year.

Even with several years of severe water restrictions in place during this drought cycle, water levels at Scofield Reservoir became so low that in the fall of 1991, Carbon County's Road Department's personnel and heavy equipment were dispatched to dredge the reservoir so we would have enough water to meet the essential needs of our citizens.

Had the Gooseberry Narrows Reservoir been in place during this time, Scofield Reservoir would have been completely out of usable water at least one or two years before the drought finally ended and 20,000 citizen lives and property would have been put in jeopardy.

Carbon County fared better during the last drought cycle which started in 2000 because large quantities of water from Skyline Mine were pumped into Eccles Creek which drained into Scofield Reservoir. At the rate of 10,000 gallons per minute or 16,142 acre feet per year, the majority of water flowing in Scofield Reservoir during this drought cycle came from Skyline Mine. Without this mine water, the maximum active storage at Scofield Reservoir on May 14, 2004 would have not been 23,578 acre feet but more like 6,000 acre feet, less than 10%

capacity. Today water being pumped into Scofield Reservoir from Skyline Mine has significantly declined.

The second attachment I prepared are significant facts, concerns and conclusions I've drawn relating to Sanpete's proposed Gooseberry Narrows project.

For example, many at the legislature may not be aware of these facts: that Sanpete water users already divert an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 acre feet of water per year from Carbon and Emery; that the project could easily exceed \$50 million in 2008 construction costs and would only benefit North Sanpete County. Because of the many adverse impacts and negative consequences of the project, opposition to the proposed Gooseberry Narrows Reservoir extends beyond the boundaries of Carbon and Emery counties. Diverting additional large quantities of fresh water away from Carbon, that the Narrows project would do, could lead to possible shut-downs of the Carbon Power plant during drought cycles. The Carbon Plant requires 3,000 acre feet per year of water to generate electricity. Therefore, Rocky Mountain Power opposes the project. Conservationists, environmental and pro-fishing groups such as Utah Rivers, Trout Unlimited, Stonefly Society, Utah Sierra Club, etc. all oppose the Narrows project because of environmental damages, degradations and dewatering to Scofield Reservoir and Upper and Lower Fish Creek. Scofield is the state's second most popular fishery.

Many of the owners of an estimated 500 recreational homes that have been built in the Scofield area are Utah citizens from the Wasatch front. Scofield Reservoir also is home to a State Park and Boy Scout camps. All of these groups would be adversely effected by Gooseberry Narrows.

The third attachment is a map that visually shows the site of the proposed 17,000 acre feet Gooseberry Narrows Reservoir in relationship to Scofield Reservoir. The site of the Narrows Reservoir, which is surrounded by private property, is southwest of Scofield Reservoir at a higher elevation of 9,000 feet. Basically, the proposed Narrow site and Bureau of Reclamation withdrawals are located at the headwaters of the Price River drainage and is a premier snow-pack area on the Wasatch Plateau. The 2,400 acres of Bureau of Reclamation withdrawals are from pristine U.S. forest lands that would serve as staging and gravel sources for the project.

Because of over allocations of water rights by the State to both Sanpete and Carbon water users, this project, if built, would virtually guarantee North Sanpete Water Users 100% of their yearly water allocations even during drought cycles. Yet Carbon Water Users, with equally valid water rights, could expect in many years only fractional parts – 50%, 25% or less – of their yearly water allocations.

SCOFIELD RESERVOIR
YEARLY MAXIMUM ACTIVE STORAGE
MAXIMUM ACTIVE STORAGE 65,800 ACRE-FEET

Year	Spilled		Max. AF	Max. Storage Date
	No	Yes		
2007	X		41,969	5-19
2006	X		54,519	6-9
2005	X		60,233	6-27
2004	X		23,578	5-14
2003	X		34,994	6-2
2002	X		34,994	5-7
2001	X		47,763	5-21
2000	X		54,295	5-14
1999		X	70,619	6-13
1998		X	70,719	6-17
1997		X	71,484	6-8
1996	X		43,960	6-17
1995	X		62,195	6-22
1994	X		41,721	5-19
1993	X		55,900	6-20
1992	X		13,880	4-21
1991	X		3,000	6-19
1990	X		22,130	6-1
1989	X		37,352	5-17
1988	X		56,972	5-27
1987	X		61,607	5-31
1986		X	73,223	5-31
1985		X	70,619	5-23
1984		X	72,920+	5-27
1983		X	72,930+	6-4
1982		X	72,930+	6-1
1981	X		55,630	6-1
1980		X	71,770	6-6
1979		X	69,190	6-8
1978	X		63,820	6-20
1977	X		26,943	6-4
1976	X		61,607	5-26
1975		X	71,200	6-19
1974		X	66,910	6-4
1973		X	70,910	6-15
1972	X		53,499	5-21
1971		X	69,760	6-1
1970		X	69,470	6-1

SCOFIELD RESERVOIR
YEARLY MAXIMUM ACTIVE STORAGE
MAXIMUM ACTIVE STORAGE 65,800 ACRE-FEET

Year	Spilled		Max. AF	Max. Storage Date
	No	Yes		
1969		X	72,350	5-25
1968		X	72,350+	6-15
1967		X	72,060	6-18
1966		X	67,760	5-31
1965	X		62,710	7-6
1964	X		38,311	6-9
1963	X		29,990	5-27
1962	X		42,220	6-12
1961	X		6,790	5-12
1960	X		19,300	5-30
1959	X		37,350	4-7
1958		X	72,060	6-2
1957	X		53,230	6-24
1956	X		29,109	5-31
1955	X		26,300	5-26
1954	X		37,830	5-10
1953	X		61,600	6-14
1952		X	76,800	5-31
1951	X		54,560	6-3
1950	X		54,000	6-10
1949	X		47,250	6-22
1948	X		30,430	5-28
1947	X		35,931	5-30
1946	X		23,369	5-13
1945	X		31,739	6-18
TOTAL:	42	21		

**POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACTS TO CARBON COUNTY AND THE STATE OF UTAH FROM
SANPETE COUNTY'S PROPOSED GOOSEBERRY NARROWS DAM & RESERVOIR PROJECT**

BACKGROUND

- Sanpete County is presently using some 69 miles of ditches, tunnels and the Fairview Reservoirs on the Wasatch Mountain tops to divert an estimated 10,000-20,000 acre feet of water per year from Emery and Carbon Counties.
- On Carbon County's side, Sanpete's main trans-mountain diversion is through the Fairview tunnel. The Cottonwood Gooseberry Irrigation Company, a private company, uses this tunnel to divert annually 3,020 acre feet of water it owns. However, a gauge on this tunnel shows in 1993 a diversion of 4,474 acre feet. **Fairview Lake's capacity 3,000 acre feet serves as a water storage reservoir for the Cottonwood Irrigators of Sanpete County.**
- Sanpete Water Conservancy District, per a 1984 legal agreement, secured an additional water right of 5,400 acre feet per year. However, none of the 5,400 acre feet has been put to beneficial use by Sanpete Water District since 1984.
- Based on this 5,400 acre/feet water right that has not been put to beneficial use for twenty-four years, Sanpete Water Conservancy District proposes to build a 17,000 acre foot reservoir above Scofield Reservoir located on the Fish Creek drainage. Fish Creek is *the* major water source for Scofield Reservoir. The project would require relocation of Highway 264 going from Flat Canyon to Skyline Drive. The 5,400 acre feet would then be diverted through the Fairview Tunnel.
- The Project would ***only benefit North Sanpete County.*** Approximately 89% of the water would be used by 250 farmers in North Sanpete to grow an additional crop of alfalfa.
- Total cost for the project could ***easily exceed \$50 million*** because of the extensive mitigation for losses of wetlands, decreased flows in the Fish Creek drainage which would damage or destroy more than 20 miles of rainbow and cutthroat trout spawning habitat, and degradations to Scofield Reservoir, the State's second most popular fishery. Inflows to Scofield would decrease by 20% during an average year and by as much as 50% during drought years.
- ***Because the project is so expensive, Sanpete is seeking subsidies from Federal and State tax dollars. Sanpete is already the most heavily subsidized county in Utah.*** They receive \$4.38 in state benefits for every \$1.00 they pay in state taxes. Carbon receives \$1.44 and Emery receives \$1.51. The Utah Foundation analysis did not take into account mineral lease royalties and severance taxes that are paid by coal mining and gas wells in Carbon and Emery. Sanpete has no coal mines or gas wells.

ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL CONCERNS

- Because of recurring droughts, Utah Power may be looking for relief from rate payers for the \$5 million they have spent on water leases this year and an additional several million dollars to install and operate water wells. Subsidizing the construction of a 17,000 acre feet reservoir to divert more water away from Carbon County will adversely affect the Utah Power's Carbon Plant at Castle Gate and possibly cause shut downs during drought cycles.
- If the Gooseberry Narrows Reservoir is constructed, Arch Coal/Skyline Mine Operation may not proceed under Flat Canyon. There are 50 million tons of recoverable coal in this area which will be lost along with miners' jobs. 173 of the 250 miners employed at Skyline are from Sanpete County. Sanpete will also lose the mineral lease royalties and property tax from recovery of the Flat Canyon Coal.
- Over the last decade, Carbon County has risen in prominence in natural gas production to currently number two by county. Carbon County is also in the top three by county in coal production. Each of these energy industries, like the Power Plants, require reliable supplies of fresh water. Diverting substantially more fresh water away from Carbon County during drought cycles could place all three energy industries in jeopardy with state-wide economic implications for rate payers.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH CONCERNS

- During the last year of the drought cycle of 1988-1992, water levels at Scofield Reservoir became so low that Carbon County Road Department's heavy equipment were dispatched to Scofield to dredge the reservoir so that we would have enough water for drinking and meeting the sanitary needs of the County's families. Had the Gooseberry Narrows Reservoir been in place during that time, Scofield Reservoir would have been ***completely out of useable water a year or two before the drought finally ended***, and 20,000 citizens lives and property would have been put in jeopardy so 250 farmers in North Sanpete could grow an additional crop of alfalfa.
- According to fire chiefs from Helper, Price and Wellington, during drought conditions in the past, there have been numerous times that their storage tanks have been low enough that if a major fire had developed there would not have been sufficient water to protect our communities.

CONCLUSIONS

- Both Emery and Carbon County Commissions support accurate gauging, monitoring and automating of Sanpete's extensive trans-mountain diversion tunnels and canals. For example, in 1993 Sanpete's Cottonwood Gooseberry Irrigation Company diverted nearly 1,500 more acre feet of water through the Fairview Tunnel than legally entitled. Emery's water conservancy district's automated on-line water monitoring program at www.ewcd.org is a good model to follow.
- Apparent over-allocation of water rights on various water sources needs to be examined by appropriate regulatory agencies. U.S. Forest Service officials claim water rights on some rivers and streams in Utah are over allocated by a factor of 2 or 3 times the available water.
- Subsidizing Sanpete's proposed Gooseberry Narrows Project with millions of Federal and State tax dollars is ethically, environmentally and economically wrong. The project is too costly, controversial, benefits too few, and hurts too many.

